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Bugbee's Popular Plays

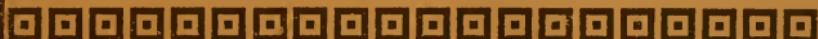


Graduation at Gayville

By

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

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Bugbee's Popular Plays

Graduation at Gayville

... BY ...

WILLIS N. BUGBEE

*Author of "Billy's Aunt Jane," "Aunt Sophronia at College,"
"Coonville 'Ristocrat Club," "Patriotism at Boggsville," etc.*

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SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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Graduation at Gayville

CHARACTERS

BERT SLAWSON

ROY BARTON

BEN WRIGHT

HARLEY GRAY

JENNIE GREEN

ANNA PETERS

PEGGY MCNEAL

ALICE BRIGGS

} *The Graduates.*

SAM JOHNSON, *a Colored Chore Boy.*

JERRY HOBSON, *an Errand Boy.*

NORA SULLIVAN, *the Janitor's Helper.*

SALLIE MCPHERSON, *a Village Girl.*

TIME OF PLAYING: *Thirty minutes.*

COSTUMES

The graduates wear ordinary school clothes. All others wear work clothes.

SCENE: *A platform, either outdoors or indoors. A few chairs, strips of bunting or evergreens are scattered about. A large motto, "LOYALTY," appears on wall. Girls are discovered at work on the decorations.*

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Graduation at Gayville

ANNA. I wonder where those boys can be all this time. How do they expect we're going to get things ready for the commencement exercises if they're not here to help. We girls can't do it alone.

PEGGY. We seem to have been doing the biggest part of it so far.

ANNA. Simply because it wouldn't be done if we didn't do it.

ALICE. I say, let's strike for higher wages.

ANNA. We'll strike those boys if they don't show up pretty soon.

PEGGY. How will you strike them if they're not here?

JENNIE. Now, girls, you shouldn't feel that way. Remember our motto is "Loyalty"—loyalty to our class, to our school and to our country.

ANNA. Yes, I know it. It was the boys' idea and now they won't do a thing to help. I don't call that very loyal.

PEGGY. I think you'll find them down on the ball ground this very minute. Harley Gray said this morning they expected to have to do some tall hustling to beat the Beanville nine.

ANNA. Well, I don't care if—

JENNIE. Yes, you do, Anna.

ANNA. How do *you* know I care?

JENNIE. Because I know you are loyal to our school. You wouldn't want it said that the Beanville nine had beaten our boys, would you?

ANNA. Why, n—no—I don't know as I would.

JENNIE. Of course not—none of us would.

ANNA. But doesn't it seem as if the boys ought to do their share?

JENNIE. Yes, of course, and no doubt they would if we spoke to them. They've probably forgotten all about it.

ALICE. Forgotten? The idea! Let's go and jog their memories then.

ANNA. All right. Come on, everybody. (*Exeunt.*)

GRADUATION AT GAYVILLE

(Enter SAM with box. Sets it down as if very heavy.)

SAM. Golly, dat box suah am heaby. I jes' wondah wat am in it. Like enuff it am bombs. Dey tole me to be mighty keerful not to drop it. Yes, sah, I betcha dat am jes' wat it is—bombs—an' dey's 'fraid it am gwineter splode. (Backs away from box.) Reckon I jes' bettah not disturb it.

(Enter Boys.)

BERT. Hello, Sam. What appears to be the trouble? What's on your mind?

SAM. Nuffin's on my mind, only I jes' brought dat box ob bombs in heah. (Roy kicks box.) Hol' on dar! Hol' on dar! Don't kick dat box. It'll blow us all into de middle ob nex' week suah's yo' born.

ROY. Bombs? What are you talking about, Sam?

SAM. Yes, sah, dat's a fac'. Dar's bombs in dar. I jes' now brought 'em in heah.

HARLEY. Bombs! Ha! ha! So's your grandmother in there.

SAM. No, sah, she couldn't squeeze in dat box noways. My grandmammy weighs free hundred an' fohty-seben pounds widout no shoes nor stockin's on.

HARLEY. Gee whiz! Some grandmother!

BEN. I should say so! But you don't need to worry about bombs, Sam. There's no bombs in there. There's a bust in that box.

SAM. A bust?

BEN. Yes, sir—a bust of George Washington. We're going to present it to the school as our class gift.

SAM. I reckon my arms am mos' busted totin' it.

BERT. Say, do you know where the girls are, Sam?

SAM. Golly, I dunno. I jes' come heah 'bout twenty-free seconds ago.

ROY. I'd like to know how they expect we're going to help them when they're never around to show us.

HARLEY. That's just what I say. Every time we get ready to work there are no girls in sight.

BEN. And I suppose when the girls are here not a boy is to be seen.

Roy. Well, suppose we go and hunt them up right now.

HARLEY. That's the only thing to be done under the circumstances. (*All start to go.*)

BERT. Oh, say, Sam, if Jerry comes with the chairs tell him to wait till we get back.

SAM. Yes, sah. (*Exit Boys.*) By grashus! Dem graduates do take de cake. Heah dey's gettin' ready fo' a commencement an' wat is it dey's gwineter commence, I jes' like to know. My! but dey do feel dere oats. Dey's gettin' so swelled up dat I'se mighty 'fraid dey's gwineter stretch out dere diaphragms.

(Enter JERRY with chairs.)

JERRY. Hello, Sam! What's the matter this mornin'?

SAM. Nuffin' de mattah 'ceptin' dat we'se gettin' ready to commence.

JERRY. Gettin' ready to commence what?

SAM. I dunno jes' what 'tis, but we suah am gwine hab some commencement.

JERRY. Haw! haw! Well, here's the chairs that was ordered.

SAM. Yes, sah, an' Mistah Bert says yo' am to wait till he comes back.

JERRY. Gosh! How am I to get my work done loafin' 'round here?

(Enter NORA with broom.)

NORA. Wheriver be the byes an' the gurrls! They told me to come an' clane up ready for the ciliation, so here I be an' niver a wan iv them around at all, at all.

SAM. Dey'll be back fo' long, Miss Nora. Yo' jes' bettah sot down an' wait a while.

NORA. Faix, an' 'tis a bit iv a rist I do be nadin', that's threue. (*Sits down.*)

JERRY. I vum! See what's comin' now—a hull posy bed.

NORA. Shure an' 'tis your own swateheart, Sallie MacPherson, wid an armful iv roses.

JERRY. So' tis. I couldn't see her face.

(Enter SALLIE with armful of flowers.)

JERRY. Hello, Sallie.

SALLIE. Hello, Jerry! What you doing here?

JERRY. Just settin', that's all. What's goin' to be did with the flowers?

SALLIE. They've got to have 'em to graduate with, so they have.

NORA. Are you goin' to graduate, Sallie?

SALLIE. Me graduate? I should say not.

JERRY. Sallie'n me never got beyond the fifth grade.

NORA. Shure an' I niver got so far as that meself.

SAM. Golly, I nebber got out of de primer class, yet.

NORA. That's just because your head is so hard the larnin' couldn't iver get thru it.

JERRY. Ho! ho! he! he! Here we are all ready. Wouldn't we make a fine lookin' class jest as we be?

SALLIE. Oh, my! Wouldn't that be funny! Let's pretend we really are graduating. What do we have to do, anyway?

SAM. I know. Fust thing we all sing.

SALLIE. That's easy enough. We can all do that.

SAM. Nex' ting am de salut—ory.

JERRY. What do we salute?

SAM. Nuffin only de audience an' de class an' ebrybody else. I knows most' ob it case I'se heard Mistah Bert say it so much. Wat I don't know I can jes' make up as I goes along.

JERRY. Then what after you get through salutin?

SAM. Well, den somebody gets up an' tells de pres'dent an' de Congress how to run de gubment.

NORA. Begorra, that'll be Jerry. He can do it to perfection.

SAM. Den somebody else makes a speech or mebbe dey reads a pome an' den comes de valleydictory. Dat's de windup, an' den somebody passes de—passes de—de—

SALLIE The contribution box?

SAM. Lawdy sakes, no. Dey passes de sheepskins.

SALLIE. Sheepskins?

SAM. Yes, um, de diplomas—papers wot dey gets fo' graduatin'.

JERRY. Well, if everybody's ready let's begin.

SALLIE. Hadn't we ought to wear some flowers? I brought along some extra ones.

JERRY. Sure! Pass 'em around, Sallie. (SALLIE passes flowers to each. *They pin them on waists or lapels.*) Now proceed with the ceremony an' everybody sing.

(All join in singing any school or college song.)

SAM. Now I'll gib de salut—ory.

Ladies an' Gemman: We welcome yo' to dese graduatin' exercises today. I salute yo' in de name of our classmates. We is mighty glad to hab yo' heah. Eber since we started to go to school in dese halls of learnin' we hab been crammin' de learnin' into our heads in big chunks till we's got so much ob it in dar dat—dat—dat our heads am likely to bust if we don't take some vacation right away quick. We hab chosen de word wat yo' see jes' above us fo' our motto. Dat means dat we'se gwinter be loyal to ebrybody—to our classmates if dey is loyal to us—to our teachers no mattah if dey do use de birch rod on us free times a day—to our frien's if they don't ask to borrow money ob us—to our school an' to our country an 'to ebrybody. We salutes yo' in de name of loyalty. Dat am all.

SALLIE. Now, Jerry, it's your turn.

JERRY. Gee! I dunno nothin' 'bout runnin' the government. The pres'dent's doin' all right so what's the use of makin' a kick. If I could do it any better I'd run for the legislatur' or something else.

NORA. I bet 'twould be something ilse. I niver saw yez do any runnin' yit. Moreover yez are not much iv a graduate if yez don't know how to run the government.

JERRY. Well, you see, this idee came so sudden like I ain't had no time to look in the dictionary for any big words nor I ain't had time to copy nothin' out of the magazines, either.

SAM. Den it am yo' turn nex', Miss Nora.

JERRY. An' then you have to give the valley-dictory, Sallie.

SALLIE. What's a valley-dictory?

JERRY. That's jest another word for "good-bye."

SALLIE. Pshaw! Is that all 'tis? I can do that.

GRADUATION AT GAYVILLE

NORA. Wull, begorra, ye've got me shtuck. I dunno how to make speeches but I can sing yez a song.

SEVERAL. Good enough!

JERRY. Pitch in, Nora, that's better than a speech.

(NORA sings and others join in chorus. Any good, lively song may be used. Enter other boys and girls at one side during the last chorus. All clap hands at conclusion of song.)

HARLEY. Well, well, what's the rumpus?

SAM. Nuffin', only we'se habin' a lil' commencement ob our own.

ROY. Well, how are you coming on?

SALLIE. Splendid! We've got all did but the valley-dictory, an' I don't know nothin' about how to do that except to say, "Glad you came—good-bye—hope you'll come again."

ALICE. That's enough for a "valley-dictory." But I'm afraid you'll have to postpone your commencement now because we've got to use the stage.

SALLIE. Ma sent over the roses for you. Here they are. I've got to hurry home. (Exit.)

JERRY. An' here's the chairs. Shall I get some more?

BERT. No, but you'd better go and get the palms. (Exit JERRY.)

NORA. An' I'm all ready to clane up soon as yez tell me where to begin.

PEGGY. We've got to finish putting these decorations up first, then we want you to sweep the stage. (Boys and girls work at decorations.)

ANNA. Well, while you people are at work I'll be rehearsing my essay.

JENNIE. When am I going to rehearse my poem, I'd like to know?

ANNA. You'll have to wait until I get through.

JENNIE. But you've been rehearsing your essay for two weeks.

ANNA. Why, Jennie Green, what a fib.

JENNIE. Well, it seems that long, anyway.

BEN. Do stop quarrelling. Why don't one of you stand on this side and the other one on that side?

ANNA. We might do that.

(They arrange on opposite sides for rehearsing.)

SAM. An' I'll be de judge of which am de bes'.

ANNA. Listen, Peggy. See if I get it right. (Reads) "It is wonderful to think of the changes that have taken place in the last half century—in the past twenty-five years, or even in the past decade. Who would ever have dreamed a hundred years ago that today we should travel about in horseless carriages?"

HARLEY. You mean "benzine buggies," don't you?

BEN. A little bit higher over there on that end.

ANNA. Mercy! I'm almost screaming now.

BEN. Shucks! I'm talking to Bert about these decorations.

PEGGY. But really, Anna, you don't raise your voice as you ought. That last is a question you know?

ANNA. How's this? "Who would ever have dreamed a hundred years ago that today we should travel about in horseless carriages?"

PEGGY. That's better.

JENNIE (to ALICE). Tell me if I don't speak plain enough, Alice.

ALICE. All right. "Sail on! Sail on!" as Columbus would say.

JENNIE (reading):

Friends and classmates, here assembled,
We have met to say good-bye;
Though we're tired and worn with study,
Yet this parting brings a sigh;
Oft perhaps we've been too careless
And have minded not the rule,
Yet we're loyal to our teachers,
We are loyal to our school.

ALICE. That's very good only not quite loud enough. Start over again.

ANNA. "Who would have dreamed fifty years ago that today men would be flying over hills and valleys, over rivers and lakes and oceans, over desert lands and fertile fields like the very birds of the air? Who would have dreamed twenty-five years ago—"

SAM. Golly, dey wouldn't do no dreamin' if dey was heah now.

BEN. You're right about that, Sam. Rip Van Winkle wouldn't have stood a ghost of a show here.

ANNA. "Who would have dreamed twenty-five years ago that—"

ROY. That such a remarkable class as this should ever happen at Gayville.

ANNA. Roy Barton, what do you mean?

ROY. Well, isn't that a fact?

ANNA. Maybe it is but you've no business to interrupt me right in the middle of my essay.

ROY. I humbly beg your pardon.

ANNA. Well, you'd better.

JENNIE. I think I ought to have a chance to rehearse my poem now.

ANNA. I started first. You ought to let me finish.

ALICE. Go ahead, Jennie, you can both rehearse together.

JENNIE (*loudly*).

"Friends and classmates, here assembled,
We have met to say good-bye—"

ANNA (*loudly*). "Who would have dreamed twenty-five years ago—"

(*Boys start pounding. Enter JERRY with palms.*)

JENNIE. Mercy me! What a racket!

ANNA. Dear me! I can't do anything here.

JERRY. Where are you going to have these palms?

PEGGY. Right here, Jerry, and the chairs will go here (*arranges them*).

BERT. Well, there! I guess that will do for the decorations.

(*The girls are busy arranging chairs.*)

HARLEY. Gee! I'm tired, boys! Let's sit down and rest a minute.

JENNIE. Hold on! Let's arrange ourselves just as we're going to sit during the exercises.

HENRY. You girls will have to show us where our seats are then.

ALICE. Certainly, we can do that. You boys are to sit over here (*shows places*) and we girls are to sit here. (*They sit down.*)

BEN. My, but you're awful particular. Any old seat is good enough for me.

JENNIE. Now may I read my poem?

SEVERAL. Sure thing. Proceed with the great literary production.

JENNIE (*reads*).

Friends and classmates here assembled,
We have met to say good-bye;
Though we're tired and worn with study,
Yet this parting brings a sigh;
Oft perhaps we've been too careless
And have minded not the rule,
Yet we're loyal to our teachers,—
We are loyal to our school.

We are loyal to our classmates
With their faces fresh and bright;
We are loyal to our parents,
Who have guided us aright;
We are loyal to our country
And its ruling magistrate;
We are loyal to our village;
(*Substitute "township if desired.*)
We are loyal to our state.

Loyalty is our motto ever
As along Life's path we go,
Though Life's storms may oft beset us
And we're harassed by the foe,

GRADUATION AT GAYVILLE

Though in foreign climes we wander,
 On the land or on the sea—
 We'll be loyal to our colors
 And the "flag that makes us free."

HENRY. That's very good, indeed. Don't you think so, boys?

BOYS. Fine! Splendid! Bully!

BEN. Almost as good as I could have done it.

JENNIE. You're making fun of it now.

HARLEY. Indeed we are not.

BEN. How about your essay, Anna? We might as well go through with that ordeal while we are about it.

ANNA. No, thanks. I don't think I need any more rehearsing.

ROY. Well, then, let's sing the class song.

SEVERAL. Yes, let's!

ALICE. And let everybody do their level best. Ready! Pitch in!

All join in singing class song. The class yell may be given as the

CURTAIN FALLS.



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